

January 2002

SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the School Budgeting and Accounting Division

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Linda McCulloch, State Superintendent

Spring Enrollment Count Is February 1

1) Non-MAEFAIRS (Paper) Filers -- Paper forms and instructions have been mailed to paper-filing districts. [NOTE: If someone else does your MAEFAIRS entry, you are not a paper filer—your Registered MAEFAIRS User will send your forms to you.]

2) MAEFAIRS Users – OPI will email a message when it's time to refresh your MAEFAIRS files and enter enrollment data. After downloading, please print paper forms and distribute, **with Instructions from the MAEFAIRS system**, to whoever will take the counts. If your enrollment is submitted on MAEFAIRS, OPI does not need paper copies.

Please call if you need assistance. Report promptly after February 1 so OPI can process ANB, calculate special ed rates, and send budget data sheets to you by March 1 as required. (We are unable to calculate special ed rates and send budget data sheets until all districts' reports are submitted!)

Enrollment is due by February 11, but earlier is even better!!

(OPI Contact: Tal Redpath (406) 444-3024 or tredpath@state.mt.us)

**Enrollment Count Date
Friday, Feb. 1, 2002
Enrollment Report Due Feb. 11,
2002**

(Remember -- Send a
copy to the Co. Supt.)



Frequently Asked Questions.....

What can the transportation fund be used for?

Transportation laws limit the transportation fund for costs of *transporting kids from home to school or the bus stop*. Costs of the transportation program include costs of operating and maintaining buses, administering the transportation program, costs of training bus drivers and providing student bus safety education, building and maintaining a bus barn, purchasing yellow school buses, providing crossing guards, and any other costs associated with transporting students from home to school.

Other travel costs, such as field trips, teachers' travel, and

athletics/activities travel must be supported using other funds.

The state and county reimbursement for bus routes and parent contracts covers only the 180 day school year (i.e., summer school and special education "extended year" transportation must be funded at district expense.) OPI Contact: Maxine Mougeot, (406) 444-3906 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

EXCEL Spreadsheets for FY03 General Fund Budgeting

The OPI spreadsheets for calculating general fund limitations for FY 2002-03 are posted on METNET and the OPI web page under <School Finance><Excel Spreadsheets>.

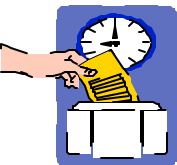
As usual, the Preliminary Budget Data Sheets, containing ANB, DSA, GTB, and special ed block grant rates, will be sent to you March 1. (OPI Contact: Joan Anderson (406) 444-1960 or janderson@state.mt.us, or Bonnie Maze (406) 444-3249 or bmaze@state.mt.us)

Flex Funding for FY03

OPI Estimates Posted: OPI estimates for district flex payments for FY03 are posted on METNET under the <School Finance> conference and on the OPI Website under <School Finance><Current Information>. Remember, the amounts are estimates (although they should not change much when finalized in January 2003.)

About the Flex Fund: An updated estimate will appear on the Preliminary Budget Data Sheets, issued March 1. You can ask voters to approve a levy in the FY03 Flexibility Fund budget (new) for up to 25% of the state's most recent estimate of funding for FY03. The election can be held any time before the FY03 budget is adopted. (OPI recommends to hold election no later than August 1.)

Final payments will be calculated in late Fall of 2002 after the October 2002 enrollment count. Payments will be sent in January 2003. Uses of the fund are listed under MCA 20-9-543. OPI contact: Bonnie Maze, 444-3249 or bmaze@state.mt.us.



Elections Info

- School Election Day is May 7, 2002. You must

hold your trustee election and general fund election, if any, on that date.

- May 2002 Election Calendar: The Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) and OPI recently updated the calendar for 2002.

The calendar is posted on the MASBO website at <http://www.masbo.com/> and on the OPI website under <School Finance><Current Information>.

- School Election Manual: The manual has been updated with Legislative changes and is currently being reviewed. We plan to finalize it by the first week in February. We'll send you an email when it is posted electronically.

- New ballot requirements: Under new legislation, most ballots that propose a new or increased tax levy must comply with MCA 15-10-425. A ballot to approve a portion of over-Maximum budget for a disequalized district requires specific ballot language under MCA 20-9-353(3) and is an exception to 15-10-425.

"15-10-425. Mill levy election....

(2).....The governing body shall pass a resolution, ...indicating an intent to impose a new levy, increase a mill levy, ... on the approval of a majority of the qualified electors voting in the election. The resolution,... must include:

- (a) the specific purpose for which the additional money will be used;
- (b) the specific amount to be raised;
- (c) the approximate number of mills required; and
- (d) the durational limit, if any, on the levy.
- (3) Notice of the election must be prepared by the governing body and given as provided by law. **The form of the ballot must reflect the content of the resolution or charter amendment and must include a statement of the impact of the election on a home valued at \$100,000 and a home valued at \$200,000 in the district in terms of actual dollars in additional property taxes that would be imposed on residences with those values if the mill levy were to pass.** The ballot may also include a statement of the impact of the election on homes of any other value in the district, if appropriate."

Do ALL elections have to be held on May 7th?

No, just the trustee elections and general fund elections.

You may hold other "special elections" either on that day or on a different day for Technology Depreciation under MCA 20-9-533(3) and (6), Flex Fund under MCA 20-9-544, bonds under MCA 20-9-427, bus depreciation fund balance transfers under MCA 20-10-147, and building reserves under MCA 20-9-502.

The "special elections" may be held on any date before the budget is adopted, August 15, 2002. OPI recommends you hold the elections by August 1 to ensure enough time for votes to be canvassed, etc. before the budget meeting!

For more information on elections :

Contact Nancy Hall at (406) 444-9852 or nhall@state.mt.us.

Mileage Rate for 2002

The state reimbursement rate for mileage effective January 2002 is \$0.365 per mile.

cc: Auditors, MASBO, MSBA, County Superintendents, MREA

Bus Inspections must be passed by January 31.



CALENDAR – School Finance

January 2002

- Jan 1 Holiday - New Year's Day. (20-1-305 MCA)
- Jan 1 Deadline for changing school district boundaries. Can't change boundaries between Jan 1 and the time the budget is set next August. (20-6-202 and 20-6-314 MCA)
- Jan 7 Electronically submitted December Child Count due to OPI for IDEA Part B and Preschool grants
- Jan 10 OPI pays federal and state grant advances
- Mid-Jan OPI sends TR-5 and TR-6 transportation claim forms to schools. Return completed forms in early Feb. to receive 1st semester transportation reimbursements (ARM 10.7.101)
- Jan 21 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (3rd Monday in January)
- Jan 25 OPI monthly payment of direct state aid and special ed funding
- Around Jan 25 OPI will post MAEFAIRS Spring Enrollment files on METNET (We'll send you an email message when they're available.)
- Jan 31 Bus inspections must be done for 2nd semester to avoid losing partial state/county reimbursement (ARM 10.7.101) (Maxine Mougeot 444-3096)
- Jan 31 (DELAYED BY U.S. Dept of Ed) ~~Impact Aid Applications due to US Dept of Education with copy to OPI.~~ (Tal Redpath 444-3024)

Feb 2002

- Feb 1 Spring 2002 Enrollment Count Date -- Keep your records for audit purposes.
- Feb 1 TR-5 and TR-6 claim forms due to County Supts. from your district—Make sure your chairperson signs the forms.
- Feb 11 Spring Enrollment due to OPI -- Be prompt. We must have fast turnaround to produce statewide budget figures by March 1 for all schools. Each district makes a difference.
- Feb 10 OPI pays federal and state grant advances
- Feb 15 TR-5 and TR-6 forms due from County Supts. to OPI
- Feb 21 First day an elector can request an absentee ballot (13-13-211, MCA) (75 days before election)
- Feb 22 December Child Count verification and signed assurance statements due to OPI (Pat Reichert 444-4430)
- Feb 25 OPI monthly payment of direct state aid and special ed funding (Bonnie Maze 444-3249)
- During Feb Indirect Cost (IDC) Rate Applications for FY2002-03 sent to schools. Return to OPI by March 31 (Jim Oberembt 444-1257)

March 2002

- In March OPI distributes packets to districts for non-public school participation in federal programs
- March 1 OPI sends FY 2002-03 Preliminary Budget Data Sheets (ANB, GTB, DSA, etc.) to districts
- March 10 "Intent to Participate" form due to OPI for State Gifted and Talented Grant
- March 10 OPI pays federal and state grant advances

March 25	OPI monthly payment of direct state aid and special ed funding (Bonnie Maze 444-3249)
March 25	OPI payment of 1st Semester Transportation Aid (444-3096)
March 28	Last day for trustees to call for school general fund election. Trustees must pass a resolution stating: 1) date of election; 2) purpose; 3) polling sites; 4) time polls will open, if before noon. (MCA 20-20-201 and 203) [At least 40 days before election]
March 28	Last day for trustee candidates to file for election. Nomination petitions must be filed with the election administrator. (MCA 13-10-201(6), 20-3-305 and 20-3-344) [no earlier than 135 days and no later than 40 days before the election]
March 30	A-133 Audits of FY01 are due to OPI [Non-A-133 audits are due by June 30] (Jim Oberembt 444-1257)
March 31	Indirect Cost Rate Applications due to OPI for FY 2002-03

April 2002

April 2	Last day to file resolution for election with county election administrator (no later than 35 days before election) (20-20-201(2), MCA)
April 7-17	Must post notice of May regular school election (MCA 20-20-204). Publish election notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the district AND post in at least 3 public places in the district, provided that in incorporated cities and towns at least one notice is posted in each ward or precinct. Radio or television may supplement the postings. Notice must include: 1) date and polling places of election; 2) polling place hours; 3) each proposition to be considered; 4) number of trustee positions subject to election and the terms for those positions; 5) where and how absentee ballots may be obtained. (MCA 20-20-204) [not less than 20 days or more than 30 days before an election]
April 11 (by 5pm)	Deadline for write-in candidates for a trustee position to file declaration of intent. (MCA 13-10-211(3)) [not less than 25 days before election]
By April 12	Election administrator certifies ballot. (Not less than 25 days before election)(MCA 20-20-401)
By April 17	Absentee ballots must be available for May election (at least 20 days prior to election) (MCA 20-20-401)
April 23	Election by acclamation and cancellation of election notice due. If no election needed due to lack of competition, and if no general fund election is required, may cancel election. (MCA 20-3-313) [no later than 25 days before the election]
April 25	OPI monthly payment of direct state aid and special ed funding (Bonnie Maze 444-3249)
April 26	Last day to notify election judges of their appointment (not less than 10 days before election) (20-20-203, MCA)

May 2002

May 7	Election Day -- Trustees Election and General Fund Election (First Tuesday after the 1st Monday, MCA 20-20-105) -- Other "special" elections MAY be held this day.
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